

ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY INDEX: CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

INTRODUCTION

Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) maps have been developed for the shoreline of central California to encompass the coastal areas from Point Conception to Point Reyes. The ESI maps include information for three main components: shoreline habitats; sensitive biological resources; and human-use resources. The methods of data collection and presentation are summarized in the following sections.

SHORELINE HABITAT MAPPING

The intertidal habitats of central California, which cover the shoreline between Point Conception to Point Reyes, were mapped during aerial overflights and ground surveys conducted from 7-14 May 1992. The aerial surveys were conducted using the California Department of Fish and Game Partenavia, flying at elevations of 300-500 feet and slow air speed. Mapping was restricted to two hours on either side of low tides during daylight hours. An experienced coastal geologist delineated the intertidal habitats directly onto 1:24,000 scale U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps. Where appropriate, multiple habitats were delineated for each shoreline segment.

Ground teams established a total of 42 stations at sites representative of all intertidal habitats. The stations were established to ground-truth the aerial mapping. The stations also characterized the key components of each shoreline habitat in terms of the sediment distribution patterns, degree of exposure to wave and tidal current energy, dominant intertidal biota, likely oil behavior and persistence, and feasible shoreline cleanup strategies. The stations will also allow for monitoring of the seasonal trends in sediment distribution and erosional/depositional cycles, which are very important in central California.

Prediction of the behavior and persistence of oil on intertidal habitats is based on an understanding of the dynamics of the coastal environments, not just the substrate type and grain size. The vulnerability of a particular intertidal habitat is an integration of the following factors:

- 1) Shoreline type (substrate, grain size, tidal elevation, origin)
- 2) Exposure to wave and tidal energy
- 3) Biological productivity and sensitivity
- 4) Ease of cleanup

All of these factors are used to determine the relative sensitivity of intertidal habitats. Key to the sensitivity ranking is an understanding of the relationships between: physical processes, substrate, shoreline type, product type, fate and effect, and sediment transport patterns. The intensity of energy expended upon a shoreline by wave action, tidal currents, and river currents directly affects the persistence of stranded oil. The need for shoreline cleanup activities is determined, in part, by the slowness of natural processes in removal of oil stranded on the shoreline.

These concepts have been used in the development of the Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI), which ranks shoreline environments as to their relative sensitivity to oil spills, potential biological injury, and ease of cleanup. Generally speaking, areas exposed to high levels of physical energy, such as wave action and tidal currents, and low biological activity rank low on the scale, whereas sheltered areas with associated high biological activity have the highest ranking. The list below includes the shoreline habitats delineated for central California, presented in order of increasing sensitivity to spilled oil.

- 1A. Exposed Rocky Cliffs
- 1B. Exposed Seawalls
- 1C. Exposed Rocky Cliffs with Boulder Talus
2. Exposed Wave-cut Platforms
3. Fine- to Medium-grained Sand Beaches
4. Coarse-grained Sand to Granule Beaches
5. Mixed Sand and Gravel Beaches
- 6A. Gravel Beaches
- 6B. Riprap
7. Exposed Tidal Flats
- 8A. Sheltered Rocky Shores
- 8B. Sheltered Man-made Structures
9. Sheltered Tidal Flats
10. Marshes

Each of the shoreline habitats are described in the following pages, in terms of their physical description, predicted oil behavior, and response considerations. Summary statistics are given for each shoreline habitat, in terms of the percent of the total shoreline length as mapped in central California. These statistics were calculated by summing the shoreline lengths for each habitat type, double counting the segments where more than one shoreline type was mapped. Therefore, even though the length of actual shoreline mapped, which includes bays and the lower parts of rivers, was determined to be 954 kilometers, the sum of all classified shorelines was 1,167 kilometers.

SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

California Department of Fish & Game (CDF&G) regional biologists in the Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) compiled the biological information presented on the maps.

Information collected and depicted on the maps denotes the key biological resources that are most likely at risk in the event of an oil spill. Six major categories of biological resources were considered during production of the maps: birds, fish, shellfish, mammals, plants, and reptiles.

On the maps, spatial distribution of the species is represented by polygons, lines, and points, as appropriate. Associated with each of these representations is an icon depicting the types of plants or animals that are present in the polygon. Species have been divided into groups and subgroups, based on their behavior and taxonomic classification. The icons reflect this grouping scheme. The groups are color coded, and the subgroups are represented by different icons as follows:

BIRDS



Alcids and Pelagic Birds



Diving Birds



Gulls and Terns



Raptors



Shorebirds



Wading Birds



Waterfowl

MAMMALS



Dolphins



Mustelids and Rodents



Sea Otters



Seals and Sea Lions



Whales

FISH



Fish

SHELLFISH



Bivalves



Crabs



Echinoderms



Gastropods and Abalone



Lobsters



Shrimp



Squid

PLANTS



Kelp and Seagrasses



Terrestrial Plants

REPTILES



Turtles

The polygon color and pattern are the same for all the animals in one group. When there is more than one group of animals in one polygon, the polygon is then assigned the multigroup color and pattern. Also associated with each polygon on the map is a number (located under the icon for the polygon). This number references a table on the reverse side of the map with a complete list of species found in the polygon as well as life-history information on each species. No polygons for the same group overlap.

There are some species that are found throughout the nearshore zone on the map. While it is important to note the presence of these species, showing these distributions as polygons would cover large areas. In addition to providing no significant increase in the level of information presented to the user, it would make the maps very difficult to read. In response to this problem, species found in over 25 percent of the water area are identified in a box stating that they are “COMMON THROUGHOUT”. This approach informs the user of the presence of these species, while maintaining readability of the map.

BIRDS

Birds are divided into several species subgroups based on behavior and taxonomy. The species list includes all the birds included on the maps sorted by subgroup. These species were included either because of their likelihood of impact by an oil spill or special protection status as threatened or endangered. Bird distribution is shown on the maps as points and polygons. Green dots on the maps depict known nesting sites. Bird polygons are shown as a green hatch pattern; however, if species in addition to birds are in the polygon, a black cross-hatch (multigroup) pattern is used. The number under the icon references a table on the reverse side of the map. In this table, the first column gives the species name, followed by the state (S) and/or federal (F) species designation for endangered (E) or threatened (T) status. The next column provides an estimate of the concentration of the species at this site. Concentration is typically indicated as ‘HIGH’, ‘MED’, or ‘LOW’. These are very subjective values based on local expert opinion on the relative concentrations in the area. If actual bird counts are available, as for nesting sites, then the actual count will be shown. The species seasonality is shown in the next twelve columns representing the months of the year. If the species is present at that location in a particular month, an ‘X’ is place in the month column. The last four columns denote the times for nesting, laying, hatching, and fledging at this site. For many species there is a temporal shift along with the spatial change, so all the temporal information included in the table is specific to the one polygon or point that it references.

FISH

Fish distributions shown on the map represent spawning areas, areas of particularly high concentrations of selected species, and anadromous streams. The species table lists all the fish included on the maps sorted by subgroups. Because these assemblages include many similar species only one icon is used for all fish, instead of one icon for each subgroup, as is the case with the other groups. Concentration or spawning areas for fish are shown as polygons on

the map. The polygons are a blue hatch pattern; however, if species in addition to fish are in the polygon, a black hatch (multigroup) pattern is used. Anadromous fish streams are shown as a thick blue line. Blue icons are associated with both the polygons and the streams. The number under the icon references a table on the reverse side of the map. In this table, the first column gives the species name. The second column denotes whether the species has been designated endangered (E), threatened (T), or special concentration status on either the state (S) or federal (F) list. The next column provides an estimate of the concentration of species at this site. Concentration is indicated as ‘HIGH’, ‘MED’, or ‘LOW’. These estimates are very subjective values based on local expert opinion on the relative concentrations in the area. The species seasonality is shown in the next twelve columns representing the months of the year. If the species is present at that location in a particular month, an ‘X’ is placed in the month column. The last two columns denote normal times for spawning (all fish) and outmigration (anadromous fish). For many species there is a temporal shift along with the spatial change, so all the temporal information included in the table is specific to the one polygon or line that it references.

MAMMALS

Coastal California has numerous species of marine mammals that potentially may be impacted by an oil spill. Because of the wide diversity in mammals, both behaviorally and physically, the mammals have been divided into subgroups. Each of these subgroups is represented by a different icon. The species table lists all the species of mammals shown on the maps, sorted by subgroup. In addition, there are a few species of terrestrial mammals that might also be impacted. Concentration areas of the more pelagic species (dolphins, porpoises, and whales) are shown on the map, and the general distributions are indicated in the “COMMON THROUGHOUT” box. Mammal distribution on the maps is shown by a brown hatch polygon. However, if species in addition to mammals are included in the polygon, a black hatch (multigroup) polygon is used. The number under the icon references a table on the reverse side of the map. In this table, the first column gives the species name. The second column denotes whether the species has been designated endangered (E) or threatened (T) status on either the state (S) or federal (F) list. The next column provides an estimate of the concentration of species at this site. Concentration is typically indicated as ‘HIGH’, ‘MED’, or ‘LOW’. These estimates are very subjective values based on local expert opinions about the relative concentrations in the area. In some cases, such as seal or seal lion haulouts, the actual number of animals likely to be present is indicated. The species seasonality is shown in the next twelve columns, representing the months of the year. If the species is present at that location in a particular month, an ‘X’ is placed in the month column. The last column indicates the most likely dates for birthing by that species. For many species there is a temporal shift along with the spatial change, so all the temporal information included in the table is specific to the one polygon that it references.

SHELLFISH

Shellfish is a very broad classification including all crustaceans and mollusks. Therefore, shellfish have been divided into several subgroups. The species table lists all the shellfish shown on the maps sorted by subgroup. Species that are commercially or recreationally important, or any species that is threatened or endangered are included. The distribution of shellfish is shown as polygons, with an orange hatch pattern. If species in addition to shellfish are included in the polygon, a black hatch (multigroup) pattern is used. Orange icons are associated with the polygons, and the silhouette of the subgroup is shown. The number under the icon references a table on the reverse side of the map. In this table, the first column gives the species name. The second column denotes whether the species has been designated endangered (E) or threatened (T) status on either the state (S) or federal (F) list. The next column provides an estimate of the concentration of species at this site. Concentration is indicated as ‘HIGH’, ‘MED’, or ‘LOW’. These estimates are very subjective values based on local expert opinion on the relative concentrations in the area. The species seasonality is shown in the next twelve columns representing the months of the year. If the species is present at that location in a particular month, an ‘X’ is placed in the month column. The last column indicates dates for spawning. For many species there is a temporal shift along with the spatial change, so all the temporal information included in the table is specific to the one polygon that it references.

PLANTS

The plants have been divided into two subgroups: kelp and seagrasses; and terrestrial plants. The terrestrial plants shown are only those on the state or federal list of threatened or endangered species. Terrestrial plants are seldom directly affected by oil; however, it is possible that cleanup operations might destroy some of the plants or their habitat. Therefore, the general locations of threatened or endangered plants are shown, so that the appropriate agency can be notified and cleanup and response efforts can be planned accordingly. The species table lists all the plants shown on the maps. The plants, whether terrestrial or aquatic, are shown as polygons with a purple hatch pattern. If species in addition to plants are present in the polygons, a black hatch (multigroup) pattern is used. Purple icons are associated with the polygons, and the silhouette of the subgroup is shown. The number under the icon references a table on the reverse side of the map. In this table, the first column gives the species name. The second column denotes whether the species has been designated



















endangered (E) or threatened (T) status on either the state (S) or federal (F) list. The next column provides an estimate of the concentration of species at this site. Concentration is typically indicated as ‘HIGH’, ‘MED’, or ‘LOW’. These estimates are very subjective values based on local expert opinion on the relative concentrations in the area. The last twelve columns provide information on the plant’s seasonality. All 12 months are marked with an ‘X’ since the plants are present all year. This method was used to make tables consistent with those of the other species found on the maps.

REPTILES

The only reptiles shown on the maps are sea turtles, specifically the leatherback sea turtle which is common throughout the Farallon Islands. A red icon with a turtle silhouette is used to identify the distribution of turtles.

HUMAN-USE FEATURES

The human-use features shown on the maps are those that could be impacted by an oil spill or could provide access to the cleanup operation. All the features are represented by icons that indicate the type of feature. If the icon is not placed on the location of the feature, a leader line is drawn from the icon to the proper location. The features shown on the maps follow:

-  Access—Sites where beach access by vehicle is possible. This information was provided by CDF&G or observed during the overflights.
-  Airport—Location of airfields or airports whether they are manned or unmanned. The locations were obtained from visual observations during the overflights or from U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps.
-  Aquaculture—Location of aquaculture facilities including hatcheries and oyster farms. This information was provided by CDF&G.
-  Archaeological site—Location of known archaeological sites in close proximity to the shoreline. This information was provided by CDF&G.
-  Boat ramp—Location of boat ramps. This information is from CDF&G, overflight observations, or topographic maps.
-  Coast Guard—Location of Coast Guard facilities. This information is from CDF&G and topographical maps.
-  Commercial fishing—Areas heavily used for commercial fishing. This information was provided by CDF&G.
-  Historical site—Location of historical sites in close proximity to the shoreline. The information was provided by CDF&G.
-  Hoist—Location of facilities which have the capability to hoist boats into and out of the water. This information was provided by CDF&G.
-  Marina—Location of any marinas. This information is from CDF&G, overflight observations, or topographic maps.
-  Marine sanctuary—The boundaries for the marine sanctuaries were provided by NOAA. The boundaries were entered based on the latitude/longitude point definitions of the marine sanctuary boundaries.
-  National park—An icon is used to show the location of the national park, but the digitized boundary was provided by CDF&G.
-  State park—An icon is used to show the location of the state park, but the digitized boundary was provided by CDF&G.
-  Recreational fishing/boating—General areas where there is heavy recreational fishing or boating. This information was provided by CDF&G.
-  Recreational beach—Location of a recreational beach. These sites are indicated with an icon; the beach boundaries were not digitized. Information was provided by CDF&G.
-  Reserve, preserve, refuge, or area of special biological significance (ASBS)—All boundaries for the reserves, preserves, refuges, or any other managed and regulated wildlife area were provided by CDF&G. The boundary is shown on the map with an icon and the name in the boundary.
-  Subsistence area—Areas utilized by native Americans for collection of subsistence seafoods. Information was provided by CDF&G.
-  Water intakes—Symbol is placed at the location of a water intake. The location information was provided by CDF&G.

For many of these features, the name of the feature, manager/owner, contact, and a phone number were provided. The information is included in the table on the reverse side of the maps. If at least a name is available for the site, it is included in the list.

NAME/OWNER	CONTACT	PHONE
FEDERALLY MANAGED PARKS AND SANCTUARIES		
NOAA Sanctuaries and Reserves Division		
Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve	Steve Kimple	408/728-0560
Gulf of Farallones National Marine Sanctuary	Mark Silberstein	408/728-2822
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary	Ed Ueber	415/556-3509
	Terry Jackson	408/647-4201
National Park Service		
Golden Gate National Recreation Area	Daphne Hatch	415/331-0744
Point Reyes National Seashore	Bill Shook	415/663-8525
Redwood National Park	Bill Donati	707/464-6101
Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge		510/792-0222
STATE MANAGED PARKS		
California Department of Parks and Recreation		
Andrew Molera State Park	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
Big Basin Redwood State Park	George Cook	408/688-3241
Chadbourne Gulch State Park		707/937-5804
Del Norte Coast Redwood State Park	Ken Wilbur	707/445-6547
Garrapata State Park	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
Humboldt Lagoons State Park		707/488-5435
Jedediah Smith Redwood State Park		
Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
MacKerricher State Park		707/964-9112
Marina State Park and Beach	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
Mendocino Headlands State Park		707/937-5804
Montana de Oro State Park	Dave Sears	805/549-3312
Morro Bay State Park	Dave Sears	805/549-3312
Mount Tamalpais State Park	Ron Angier	415/388-2070
Natural Bridges Beach State Park	George Cook	408/688-3241
Navarro River State Park		707/937-5804
Patricks Point State Park		707/677-3570
Pelican Beach State Park	Dan Scott	707/464-9533
Point Sal Beach Park		805/733-3713
Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park		707/488-2171
Russian Gulch State Park		707/937-5804
San Simeon Beach State Park	Debbie Weldon	805/927-2020
Thornton Beach State Park	Don Hoyle	415/726-8800
Tomales Bay State Park	Carlos Porrata	415/669-1140
Van Damme State Park		707/937-5804
Wilder Ranch State Park	George Cook	408/688-3241
Zmudowski Beach State Park	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
RECREATIONAL BEACHES		
California Department of Parks and Recreation		
Asilomar State Beach	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
Avila State Beach	Don Patton	805/473-7230
Bean Hollow State Beach	Don Hoyle	415/726-8800
Capitola City Beach	Steve Schneider	408/454-2022
Carmel City Beach	John McGilvary	408/624-6403
Carmel River State Beach	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
Cayucos State Beach	Dave Sears	805/549-3312
Cowell Beach	Steve Schneider	408/454-2022
Gray Whale Cove State Beach	Don Hoyle	415/726-8800
Hays Perkins Park/Shoreline Park	Charles Wilkens	
Jalama Beach County Park		805/736-3504
Lighthouse Field State Beach	George Cook	408/688-3241
Manchester State Beach		707/937-5804
Manressa State Beach	George Cook	408/688-3241
Montara State Beach	Don Hoyle	415/726-8800
Monterey State Beach	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
Morro Strand/Grand Strand/Gale Beach	Dave Sears	805/549-3312
Moss Landing State Beach	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
Muir State Beach		
New Brighton State Beach	George Cook	408/688-3241
Pfeiffer State Beach	Kathleen Jordan	408/385-5434
Pismo State Beach	Don Patton	805/473-7230
Point Sal State Beach	Steve Treanor	805/654-4611
Rio Del Mar State Beach	George Cook	408/688-3241
Salinas River State Beach	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
San Mateo Coast State Beaches	Don Hoyle	415/726-8800
Schooner Gulch State Beach	David Burtlett	707/937-5804
Seacliff State Beach	George Cook	408/688-3241
Sharp Park Beach and Pacifica Pier	Joe Jimeno	415/355-0690

NAME/OWNER	CONTACT	PHONE
RECREATIONAL BEACHES (continued)		
California Department of Parks and Recreation		
Sonoma Coast State Beach	Brian Hickey	707/865-2391
Sonoma Coast State Beach—Goat Rock	Brian Hickey	707/865-2391
Sonoma Coast State Beach—Russian Gulch	Brian Hickey	707/865-2391
Sonoma Coast State Beach—Bodega Head	Brian Hickey	707/865-2391
Sunset State Beach	George Cook	408/688-3241
Trinidad State Beach		707/445-4567
Twin Lakes State Beach	George Cook	408/688-3241
Westport Union Landing State Beach		707/937-5804
William R. Hearst Memorial State Beach	Debbie Weldon	805/927-2020
National Park Service		
Golden Gate NRA North District Ranger	Dick Danielson	415/331-1422
Golden Gate NRA South District Ranger	Jim Milestone	415/556-8371
Golden Gate NRA Central Dispatch		415/556-7968
Point Reyes National Seashore		415/663-8525
Del Norte County Department of Parks and Beaches		
Beach Front Park		707/464-7237
Clifford Kamph Memorial Park		707/464-7237
Humboldt County Department of Parks		
Big Lagoon County Park		707-445-7651
Luffenholtz Beach County Park		707/445-7651
Sonoma County Regional Parks		
Doran Regional Park	Tom Meyskens	707/875-3540
Miscellaneous Beaches		
Fish Rock Beach/Anchor Bay	Mike Henderson	707/884-4222
Pigeon Point Lighthouse and Hotel (SMCSB)	Janice Keen	415/879-0002
Pismo Dunes Vehicular Recreation Area	Don Patton	805/473-7230
Recreational Beach		707/464-9506
Rockaway Beach	Wendy Cosin	415/738-7341
San Pedro Beach	Wendy Cosin	415/738-7341
Sand Dollar Picnic Area and Beach	Kathleen Jordan	408/385-5434
Santa Cruz Beach and Boardwalk	Marq Lipton	408/423-5590
Scott Creek Beach	Ben Angove	408/454-2820
Seabright Beach	Steve Schneider	408/454-2022
Sharp Park Beach	Joe Jimeno	415/355-0690
RESERVES, PRESERVES, AND REFUGES		
Ano Nuevo Point and Island State Reserve	Gary Straehen	415/879-2025
Atascadero Beach/Morro Strand Pismo Clam Reserve	Bob Hardy	805/772-1261
Bird Rock - ASBS, National Park Service	Bill Shook	415/663-8525
Bodega Marine Life Refuge, University of California	Peter Connors	707/875-2020
Bolinas Lagoon Nature Marine Reserve OSP, Marin County	Ron Paolini	415/499-6405
California Sea Otter Game Refuge	Fred Wendell	805/772-1261
Carmel Bay Ecological Reserve	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
Del Mar Landing Ecological Reserve, CDF&G	Mike Williams	707/585-9768
Double Point - ASBS, Southern California Water Resources		
Duxbury Reef and Extension Reserve and ASBS, Marin County	Ron Paolini	415/499-6405
Farallon Island National Wildlife Refuge, USF&WS	Jean Takekawa	510/792-0222
Farallon Islands State Game Refuge		
Gerstle Cove ASBS, California Department of Parks and Recreation	Brian Hickey	707/865-2391
Hopkins Marine Life Laboratory and Refuge	Dennis Powers	408/655-6212
James Fitzgerald Marine Reserve	Bob Breen	415/728-3584
John Little State Reserve	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
Jughandle State Reserve, National Park Service		707/937-5804
Kelp Beds Ar Saunders Reef ASBS, CDF&G	Steve Morse	707/964-0924
King Range National Conservation Area		707/822-7648
Kruse Rhododendron State Reserve		
Landels Hill—Big Creek Reserve	Dr. John Smiley	408/667-2546
Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden		707/964-4352
Morro Bay State Park, California Department of Parks and Recreation	Dave Sears	805/549-3312

NAME/OWNER	CONTACT	PHONE
RESERVES, PRESERVES, AND REFUGES (continued)		
Morro Dunes Ecological Reserve	Jim Lidberg	805/528-0782
Morro Dunes Natural Preserve	Dave Sears	805/549-3312
Morro Rock Ecological Reserve	Dave Sears	805/549-3312
Morro Strand Clam Reserve	Bob Hardy	805/772-1261
Moss Landing Wildlife Area	Terry Palmiszno	408/848-2576
Nipomo Dunes Preserve		
Ocean Cove Reserve	Gary Minaro	707/847-3422
Pacific Grove Marine Gardens Fish Refuge	Jerry Spratt	408/649-2880
Pismo Invertebrate Reserve	Bob Hardy	805/772-1261
Pismo/Oceano Beach Pismo Clam Reserve	Bob Hardy	805/772-1261
Point Lobos Ecological Reserve	Bill Fait	408/649-2836
Point Reyes Headland Reserve, CDF&G	Tom Moore	707/875-2521
Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge	Rick Coleman	510/792-0222
Salmon Creek ASBS	Paul Jugger	805/549-3690
Sea Otter Game Refuge	Fred Wendell	805/772-1261
The Nature Conservancy—Elkhorn Slough	Mark Silberstein	408/728-2822

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM DATA

The entire atlas product is stored in digital form in a Geographic Information System (GIS). The information is stored as maps and associated databases. The format for the data varies depending on the type of information or features for which the data are being stored. The three major formats are shoreline habitat classification, biological resources, and human-use features.

Under separate cover are a complete data dictionary, metadata, and descriptive information for the digital data sets and maps that were used to create this atlas. Below is a brief synopsis of the information contained in the digital version. Please refer to the metadata file for full explanations of the data and its structure.

SHORELINE HABITAT CLASSIFICATION

The shoreline habitat classification is stored as lines or polygons with the data identifying the type of habitat associated with the line. In many cases, a shoreline may have two or three different classifications. These multiple classifications are represented on the maps by double and triple lines, and in the database by ESI#1/ESI#2 where ESI#1 is the landward-most classification and ESI#2 is the seaward-most classification.

SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Biological resources are shown on the map by colored and shaded polygons, colored lines and dots, and colored icons. The associated table helps to further identify the resources. In the digital copy, the resources are depicted as lines, points, or polygons. Associated with each map feature is a unique identification number which is linked to a series of databases that further identify the resources. The first data set consists of a list of the species, concentration of each species, and an expert contact for the species. This dataset is then linked to a data set that describes the life history of each species (temporal presence and reproductive times at month resolution) for the specified map feature. Other databases linked to the first data set are the species identification database, which includes common and scientific names for all species and threatened or endangered status, and the experts database, which includes the name, agency, address, phone number, geographical area of expertise, and biological area of expertise for each of the experts referenced.

HUMAN-USE FEATURES

Human-use features are represented on the maps as an icon describing the feature. In the digital file, the feature location is represented by a point. Attached to the point is a data file that contains the fields for the name of the owner/manager, phone number at which the person can be contacted, identification of the type of feature, and a brief description of the feature. This information is incomplete and may change frequently.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was supported jointly by NOAA’s Hazardous Materials Response and Assessment Division, Robert Pavia, Project Manager, and the Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response, Don Lollock, Program Manager. James Morris, Scientific Support Coordinator from NOAA, assisted with many aspects of the logistical arrangements and participated in the field surveys. Don Lollock, Dale Watkins, and Mel Odemar of OSPR’s management staff made critical arrangements and participated in some of the field surveys.

All the biological data included on these maps were provided by John Tarpley, Jim Hardwick, Joe Lesh, Melissa Boggs, and Heidi Togstad of CDF&G. They in turn collected the information from numerous people throughout the state of California. The data collection effort was coordinated by Randy Imai of CDF&G.

Kim McCleneghan contributed significantly to the formulation of the project and participated in all phases of the field work. Much of the field work at the ground-truth stations was carried out by personnel from OSPR’s Science program, including: Jack Ames, Melissa Boggs, Larry Espinosa, John Grant, Jim Hardwick, Randy Imai, Joe Lesh, Robin Lewis, Dave Rasmussen, John Tarpley, and Heidi Togstad.

At Research Planning, Inc. (RPI), Jeffrey Dahlin was the project biologist and was responsible for the organization of the biological data and the automation of the maps. Shoreline mapping was conducted by Jacqueline Michel and Miles O. Hayes. James Olsen, Scott Johnson, Niles Shiroff, William Holton, Lee Diveley, and Mark White entered the data and produced the final maps. Mike Bise designed the cover, graphics support was provided by Joe Holmes, and Dot Zaino prepared the text.

SPECIES LIST*	
Common Name	Species Name
BIRDS	
ALCIDS AND PELAGIC BIRDS	
Ashy storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma homochroa</i>
Cassin’s auklet	<i>Ptychoramphus aleuticus</i>
Common murre	<i>Uria aalge</i>
Leach’s storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i>
Marbled murrelet	<i>Brachyramphus marmoratus</i>
Pigeon guillemot	<i>Cepphus columba</i>
Pink-footed shearwater	<i>Puffinus creatopus</i>
Rhinoceros auklet	<i>Cerorhinca monocerata</i>
Sooty shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>
Tufted puffin	<i>Lunda cirrhata</i>
DIVING BIRDS	
Brandt’s cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax penicillatus</i>
<u>Brown pelican</u>	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>
Common loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax sp.</i>
Double-crested cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>
Horned grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>
Pelagic cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus</i>
Pied-billed grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
Red-necked grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>
Western grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>
White pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>
GULLS AND TERNS	
Heermann’s gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>
Western gull	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>
<u>California least tern</u>	<i>Sterna antillarum browni</i>
Caspian tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>
Forster’s tern	<i>Sterna fosteri</i>
Least tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
RAPTORS	
<u>Bald eagle</u>	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
Northern harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
<u>Peregrine falcon</u>	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
SHOREBIRDS	
Black oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus bachmani</i>
Black turnstone	<i>Arenaria melancephala</i>
Black-bellied plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Greater yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanaleuca</i>
Marbled godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>
Northern phalarope (red-necked)	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>
Red phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
<u>Western snowy plover</u>	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus nirosus</i>
Willet	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>
WADING BIRDS	
American avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>
Black-crowned night heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Black-necked stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>
<u>California black rail</u>	<i>Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus</i>
<u>Clapper rail</u>	<i>Rallus longirostris</i>
Great blue heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
Snowy egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>
WATERFOWL	
American coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>
Black brant	<i>Branta bernicla</i>
Black scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>
Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>
Canvasback	<i>Aythya valisineria</i>
Greater scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>
Green-winged teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Lesser scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>
Northern pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Red-breasted merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>
Ruddy duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>
Surf scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>
White-winged scoter	<i>Melanitta deglandi</i>
MAMMALS	
DOLPHINS	
Bottlenose dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>
Dall’s porpoise	<i>Phocoenoides dalli dalli</i>
Harbor porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>
Northern right-whale dolphin	<i>Lissodelphis borealis</i>
Pacific white-sided dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus obliquidens</i>
Risso’s dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>

SPECIES LIST*	
Common Name	Species Name
MAMMALS (continued)	
MUSTELIDS AND RODENTS	
River otter	<i>Lutra canadensis</i>
SEA OTTERS	
<u>Sea otter</u>	<i>Enhydra lutris</i>
SEALS AND SEA LIONS	
Harbor seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>
Northern elephant seal	<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>
California sea lion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>
<u>Guadalupe fur seal</u>	<i>Arctocephalus townsendi</i>
<u>Northern (Steller) sea lion</u>	<i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>
Northern fur seal	<i>Callorhinus ursinus</i>
WHALES	
<u>Blue whale</u>	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>
<u>Fin whale</u>	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>
<u>Gray whale</u>	<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>
<u>Humpback whale</u>	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>
Minke whale	<i>Baleonoptera acutorostrata</i>
<u>Sperm whale</u>	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>
FISH	
ANADROMOUS	
Chinook salmon (king)	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>
Coho salmon (silver)	<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>
Rainbow trout (steelhead)	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>
Salmon fishery (commercial)	
Striped bass	<i>Morone saxatilis</i>
KELP SPAWNERS	
Pacific herring	<i>Clupea harengus pallasii</i>
BEACH SPAWNERS	
California grunion	<i>Leuresthes tenuis</i>
Surf smelt	<i>Hypomesus pretiosus</i>
SPECIAL CONCENTRATIONS	
C-O turbot	<i>Pleuronichthys coenosus</i>
California halibut	<i>Paralichthys californicus</i>
Jacksmelt	<i>Atherinopsis californiensis</i>
Lingcod	<i>Ophiodon elongatus</i>
Night smelt	<i>Spirinchus starksi</i>
Northern anchovy	<i>Engraulis mordax</i>
Prickly sculpin	<i>Cottus asper</i>
Rockfish	<i>Sebastes spp.</i>
Shiner perch	<i>Cymatogaster aggregata</i>
Starry flounder	<i>Platichthys stellatus</i>
Surfperch	<i>Embiotocidae</i>
Threespine stickleback	<i>Gasterosteus aculeatus</i>
<u>Tidewater goby</u>	<i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i>
SHELLFISH	
BIVALVES	
Common Pacific littleneck clam	<i>Protothaca staminea</i>
Gaper clam	<i>Tresus nuttallii</i>
Geoduck	<i>Panope generosa</i>
Pismo clam	<i>Tivela stultorum</i>
Razor clam (western)	<i>Siliqua patula</i>
Washington clam	<i>Saxidomus nuttallii</i>
Pacific oyster	<i>Crassostrea gigas</i>
California mussel	<i>Mytilus californianus</i>
Rock scallop	<i>Hinnites multirugosus</i>
CRABS	
Dungeness crab	<i>Cancer magister</i>
ECHINODERMS	
Red sea urchin	<i>Strongylocentrotus franciscanus</i>
GASTROPODS AND ABALONE	
California brackish water snail	<i>Tryonia imitator</i>
Abalone	<i>Haliotis sp.</i>
Black abalone	<i>Haliotis cracherodii</i>
Pink abalone	<i>Haliotis corrugata</i>
Red abalone	<i>Haliotis rufescens</i>
LOBSTERS	
California spiny lobster	<i>Panulirus interruptus</i>

* Threatened and endangered species are designated by underlining.

SPECIES LIST*

Common Name	Species Name
SHELLFISH (continued)	
SHRIMP	
Bay ghost shrimp	<i>Callinassa californiensis</i>
SQUID	
Squid	<i>Loligo spp.</i>
PLANTS	
KELP AND SEAGRASSES	
Bull kelp	<i>Nereocystis luetkeana</i>
Eelgrass	<i>Zostera marina</i>
Giant kelp	<i>Macrocystis pyrifera</i>
Surfgrass	<i>Phyllospadix spp.</i>
TERRESTRIAL PLANTS	
<u>Beach layia</u>	<i>Layia carnosa</i>
<u>Clover lupine</u>	<i>Lupinus tidestromii tidestromii</i>
<u>Coastal dunes milkvetch</u>	<i>Astragalus tener titi</i>
<u>Menzies wallflower</u>	<i>Erysimum menziesii</i>
<u>Salt marsh bird’s-beak</u>	<i>Cordylantus maritimus maritimus</i>
<u>Sand (Monterey) gilia</u>	<i>Gilia tenuiflora arenaria</i>
<u>Western lily</u>	<i>Lilium occidentale</i>
REPTILES	
TURTLES	
<u>Leatherback sea turtle</u>	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>

* Threatened and endangered species are designated by underlining.

SHORELINE HABITAT DESCRIPTIONS

EXPOSED ROCKY CLIFFS

ESI = 1A and 1C

DESCRIPTION

- The intertidal zone is steep (greater than 30° slope), with very little width.
- Sediment accumulations are uncommon and usually ephemeral, because waves remove the debris that has slumped from the eroding cliffs.
- Where large boulders have accumulated as talus at the base of the cliff, the shoreline has been classified as 1C.
- This shoreline type is never used in combination with another shoreline type, however they are often found interspersed with wave-cut platforms.
- There is strong vertical zonation of intertidal biological communities.
- Species density and diversity vary greatly, but barnacles, snails, mussels, seastars, limpets, sea anemones, shore crabs, polychaetes, and macroalgae are often very abundant.
- They are common throughout central California, comprising about eight percent of the shoreline.



PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- Oil is held offshore by wave reflecting off the steep cliffs.
- Any oil that is deposited is rapidly removed from exposed faces.
- The most resistant oil would remain as a patchy band at or above the high-tide line.
- Impacts to intertidal communities are expected to be short-term duration. An exception would be where heavy concentrations of a light refined product came ashore very quickly.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- Cleanup is usually not required.
- Access can be difficult and dangerous.

EXPOSED SEAWALLS

ESI = 1B

DESCRIPTION

- Seawalls occur in developed areas to provide protection to residential and industrial developments.
- They are composed of concrete or metal bulkheads.
- Organisms, such as barnacles, mussels, and algae, may be common on the lower levels, whereas biota along the upper intertidal zones is sparse.
- They comprise less than one percent of the shoreline.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- Oil would percolate between the joints of the structures.
- Oil would coat the intertidal areas of solid structures.
- Biota would be impacted under heavy accumulations.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- High-pressure spraying may be required in order to:
 - remove oil;
 - prepare substrate for recolonization of barnacle and mussel communities;
 - minimize aesthetic damage;
 - prevent the chronic leaching of oil from the structure.

EXPOSED WAVE-CUT PLATFORMS

ESI=2

DESCRIPTION

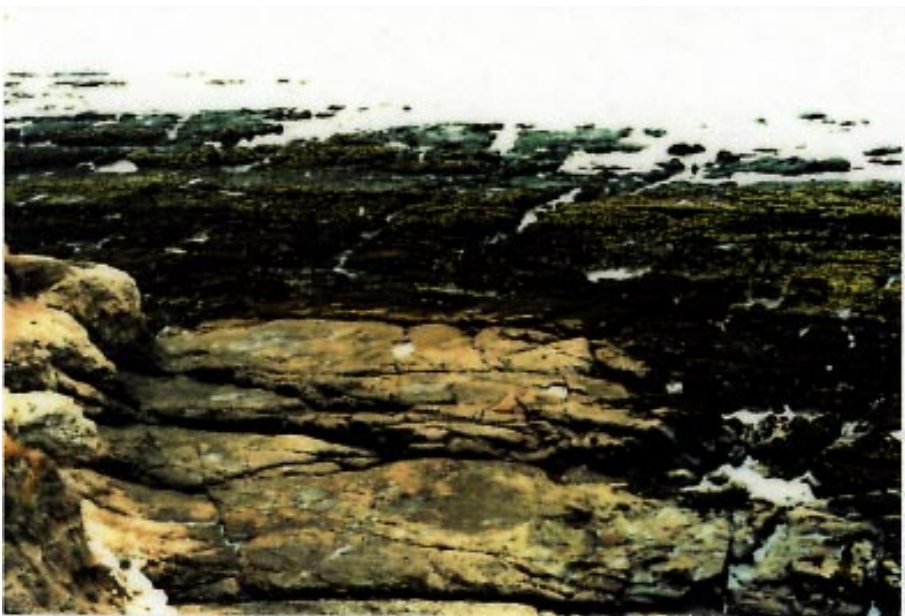
- The intertidal zone consists of a flat rock bench of highly variable width.
- The shoreline may be backed by a steep scarp or low bluff.
- There may be a perched beach of sand- to boulder-sized sediments at the base of the scarp.
- The platform surface is irregular and tidal pools are common.
- Small accumulations of gravel can be found in the tidal pools and crevices in the platform.
- These habitats can support large populations of encrusting animals and plants, with rich tidal pool communities. Dominant species include abalone, barnacles, snails, mussels, seastars, limpets, sea anemones, shore crabs, and polychaetes.
- They are the most common shoreline type in central California, representing over 27 percent of the shoreline.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- Oil will not adhere to the rock platform, but rather be transported across the platform and accumulate along the high-tide line.
- Oil can penetrate in beach sediments, if present.
- Persistence of oiled sediments is usually short-term, except in wave shadows or larger sediment accumulations.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- Cleanup is usually not required.
- Where the high-tide area is accessible, it may be feasible to remove heavy oil accumulations and oiled debris.



FINE- TO MEDIUM-GRANED SAND BEACHES

ESI=3

DESCRIPTION

- These beaches are generally flat, wide, and hard-packed.
- They can occur at the upper intertidal zone on wave-cut platforms.
- Where gravel storm berms occur in the upper intertidal zone, they are also denoted on the maps.
- There can be significant seasonal changes in the beach sediments.
- Upper beach fauna are scarce; lower beach fauna (particularly *Emerita*) can be dense, but are highly variable.
- These beaches are very common, comprising over 25 percent of the shoreline.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- Light oil accumulations will be deposited as oily swashes or bands along the upper intertidal zone.
- Heavy oil accumulations will cover the entire beach surface; the oil will be lifted off the lower beach with the rising tide.
- Maximum penetration of oil into fine-grained sand is about 10 cm and into medium-grained sand is about 15 cm.
- Burial of oiled layers by clean sand within the first few weeks will be less than 30 cm along the upper beach face.
- Organisms living in the beach may be killed by smothering or lethal oil concentrations in the interstitial water.
- Biological impacts include temporary declines in infaunal populations, which can also affect important shorebird foraging areas.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- These beaches are among the easiest beach types to clean.
- Cleanup should concentrate on the removal of oil from the upper swash zone after all oil has come ashore.
- Activity through both oiled and dune areas should be severely limited, to prevent contamination of clean areas.
- Manual cleanup, rather than road graders and front-end loaders, is advised to minimize the volume of sand removed from the shore and requiring disposal.
- All efforts should focus on preventing the mixture of oil deeper into the sediments by vehicular and foot traffic.



DESCRIPTION

- These beaches are moderate-to-steep, of variable width, and have soft sediments.
- They are commonly backed by dunes or rocky cliffs along exposed, outer coasts.
- Generally species density and diversity is lower than on fine-grained sand beaches.
- They comprise only 7.5 percent of the shoreline.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- During small spills, oil will be deposited primarily as a band along the high-tide line.
- Under very heavy accumulations, oil may spread across the entire beach face, though the oil will be lifted off the lower part of the beach with the rising tide.
- Penetration of oil into coarse-grained sand can reach 25 cm.
- Burial of oiled layers by clean sand can be rapid, and to depths of 60 cm or more.
- Burial to depths over one meter is possible if the oil comes ashore at the start of a depositional period.
- Biological impacts include temporary declines in infaunal populations, which can also affect important shorebird foraging areas.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- Remove oil primarily from the upper swash lines.
- Removal of sediment should be limited to avoid erosion problems.
- Mechanical reworking of the sediment into the surf zone may be used to release the oil without sediment removal.
- Activity in the oiled sand should be limited to prevent mixing oil deeper into the beach.
- Use of heavy equipment for oil/sand removal may result in the removal of excessive amounts of sand; manual cleanup may be more effective.
- Mechanical reworking of oiled sediments from the high-tide zone to the upper intertidal zone can be effective in areas regularly exposed to wave activity (as evidenced by storm berms). However, oiled sediments should not be relocated below the mid-tide zone.
- In-place tilling may be used to reach deeply buried oil layers in the middle zone on exposed beaches.



DESCRIPTION

- Moderately sloping beach composed of a mixture of sand and gravel (less the 80 percent of dominant fraction).
- Because of the mixed sediment sizes, there may be zones of pure sand, pebbles, or cobbles.
- There can be large-scale changes in the sediment distribution patterns depending upon season, because of the transport of the sand offshore during storms.
- Because of sediment mobility and desiccation, on exposed beaches there are low densities of attached animals and plants.
- The presence of attached algae, mussels, and barnacles indicates beaches that are relatively sheltered, with the more stable substrate supporting a richer biota.
- They comprise over eight percent of the shoreline.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- During small spills, oil will be deposited along and above the high-tide swash.
- Large spills will spread across the entire intertidal area.
- Oil penetration into the beach sediments may be up to 50 cm; however, the sand fraction can be quite mobile, and oil behavior is much like on a sand beach if the sand fraction exceeds about 40 percent.
- Burial of oil may be deep at and above the high-tide line, where oil tends to persist, particularly where beaches are only intermittently exposed to waves.
- In sheltered pockets on the beach, pavements of asphalted sediments can form if there is no removal of heavy oil accumulations, because most of the oil remains on the surface.
- Once formed, these asphalt pavements can persist for many years.
- Oil can be stranded in the coarse sediments on the lower part of the beach, particularly if the oil is weathered or emulsified.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- Remove heavy accumulations of pooled oil from the upper beachface.
- All oiled debris should be removed.
- Sediment removal should be limited as much as possible.
- Low-pressure flushing can be used to float oil away from the sediments for recovery by skimmers or sorbents. High-pressure spraying should be avoided because of potential for transporting contaminated finer sediments (sand) to the lower intertidal or subtidal zones.



DESCRIPTION

- Gravel beaches are composed of sediments ranging in size from pebbles to boulders.
- They can be very steep, with multiple wave-built berms forming the upper beach.
- Attached animals and plants are usually restricted to the lowest parts of the beach, where the sediments are less mobile.
- The presence of attached algae, mussels, and barnacles indicates beaches that are relatively sheltered, with the more stable substrate supporting a richer biota.
- They are common adjacent to cliffs and platforms, comprising seven percent of the shoreline.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- Deep penetration and rapid burial of stranded oil is likely on exposed beaches.
- On exposed beaches, oil can be pushed over the high-tide and storm berms, pooling and persisting above the normal zone of wave wash.
- Long-term persistence will be controlled by the depth of penetration versus the depth of routine reworking by storm waves.
- On the more sheltered portions of beaches, formation of asphalt pavements is likely where accumulations are heavy.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- Heavy accumulations of pooled oil should be removed quickly from the upper beach.
- All oiled debris should be removed.
- Sediment removal should be limited as much as possible.
- Low- to high-pressure flushing can be used to float oil away from the sediments for recovery by skimmers or sorbents.
- Mechanical reworking of oiled sediments from the high-tide zone to the upper intertidal zone can be effective in areas regularly exposed to wave activity (as evidenced by storm berms). However, oiled sediments should not be relocated below the mid-tide zone.
- In-place tilling may be used to reach deeply buried oil layers in the middle intertidal zone on exposed beaches.



DESCRIPTION

- Riprap structures are composed of cobble- to boulder-sized rock fragments.
- Riprap structures are placed for shoreline protection and inlet stabilization.
- Mid- and low-intertidal zone biota on the riprap may be plentiful and varied.
- Riprap structures represent less than 1 percent of the shore-line.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- Deep penetration of oil between the boulders is likely.
- Oil adheres readily to the rough rock surfaces.
- If oil is left uncleaned, it may cause chronic leaching until the oil asphaltizes.
- Resident fauna and flora may be killed by the oil.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- When the oil is fresh and liquid, high-pressure spraying and/or water flooding may be effective, making sure to recover all released oil.
- Heavy and weathered oils are more difficult to remove, requiring scrapping and/or hot-water spraying.
- It may be necessary to remove heavily oiled riprap and replace it.



EXPOSED TIDAL FLATS

ESI = 7

DESCRIPTION

- They are composed primarily of sand and mud.
- The presence of sand indicates that tidal or wind-driven currents and waves are strong enough to mobilize the sediments.
- They are always associated with another shoreline type on the landward side of the flat.
- The sediments are water-saturated, with only the topographically higher ridges drying out during low tide.
- Biological utilization can be very high, with large numbers of infauna, heavy use by birds for roosting and foraging, and use as haulouts for marine mammals.
- They are not common in central California, comprising only one percent of the shoreline length.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- Oil does not usually adhere to the surface of exposed tidal flats, but rather moves across the flat and accumulates at the high-tide line.
- Deposition of oil on the flat may occur on a falling tide if concentrations are heavy.
- Oil does not penetrate water-saturated sediments.
- Biological damage may be severe, primarily to infauna, thereby reducing food sources for birds and other predators.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- Currents and waves can be very effective in natural removal of the oil.
- Cleanup is very difficult (and possible only during low tides).
- The use of heavy machinery should be restricted to prevent mixing of oil into the sediments.
- On sand flats, oil will be removed naturally from the flat and deposited on the adjacent beaches where cleanup is more feasible.



SHELTERED ROCKY SHORES

ESI = 8A

DESCRIPTION

- They are bedrock shores of variable slope (from vertical cliffs to wide, rocky ledges) that are sheltered from exposure to most wave and tidal energy.
- The wider shores may have some surface sediments, but the bedrock is the dominant substrate type
- Species density and diversity vary greatly, but barnacles, snails, mussels, seastars, limpets, sea anemones, shore crabs, polychaetes, and macroalgae are often very abundant.
- Sheltered rocky shores are rare in central California, comprising about 1 percent of the shoreline.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- Oil will adhere readily to the rough rocky surface, particularly along the high-tide line, forming a distinct oil band.
- Even on wide ledges, the lower intertidal zone usually stays wet (particularly when algae covered), preventing oil from adhering to the rock surface.
- Heavy and weathered oils can cover the upper zone with little impacts to the rich biological communities of the lower zone.
- Where surface sediments are abundant, oil will penetrate into the crevices formed by the surface rubble and pool at the contact of the sediments and the rock surface.
- Where the rubble is loosely packed, oil will penetrate deeply, causing long-term contamination of the subsurface sediments.



RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- Low- to high-pressure spraying at ambient water temperatures is most effective when the oil is fresh.
- Extreme care must be taken not to spray in the biologically rich lower intertidal zone or when the tidal level reaches that zone.
- Cutting of oiled, attached algae is not recommended; tidal action will eventually float this oil off, so sorbent booms should be deployed.

SHELTERED MAN-MADE STRUCTURES

ESI = 8B

DESCRIPTION

- These structures include revetments, seawalls, piers, and docks constructed of impermeable materials such as concrete.
- They are found inside harbors and bays in highly developed areas.
- They are very uncommon, comprising only 0.3 percent of the shoreline.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- On impermeable surfaces, the oil will form a band at the high-tide line.
- If the oil is not removed, it may cause chronic leaching until the oil hardens into an asphalt deposit.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- High-pressure spraying may be required to remove oil for aesthetic reasons and to prevent leaching of oil from the structure.
- Cleanup crews should make sure to recover all released oil.

SHELTERED TIDAL FLATS

ESI = 9

DESCRIPTION

- They are composed primarily of silt and clay.
- They are present in calm-water habitats, sheltered from major wave activity, and are frequently fronted by marshes.
- Wave energy is very low, although there may be strong tidal currents on parts of the flat and in channels across the flat.
- The sediments are very soft and cannot support even light foot traffic.
- There can be large populations of clams, worms, and snails.
- Bird life is seasonally abundant.
- Sheltered tidal flats comprise over 7 percent of the shoreline length.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- Oil does not usually adhere to the surface of sheltered tidal flats, but rather moves across the flat and accumulates at the high-tide line.
- Deposition of oil on the flat may occur on a falling tide if concentrations are heavy.
- Oil will not penetrate the water-saturated sediments at all.
- In areas of high suspended sediments, sorption of oil can result in deposition of contaminated sediments on the flats.
- Biological damage may be severe.

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- These are high-priority areas necessitating the use of spill protection devices to limit oil-spill impact; deflection or sorbent booms and open water skimmers should be used.
- Cleanup of the flat surface is very difficult because of the soft substrate and many methods may be restricted.
- Manual operations and deployment of sorbents from shallow-draft boats may be helpful.



MARSHES

ESI = 10

DESCRIPTION

- Marshes are intertidal wetlands containing emergent, herbaceous vegetation.
- Width of the marsh can vary widely, from a narrow fringe to extensive areas.
- They are relatively sheltered from waves and strong tidal currents.
- Resident flora and fauna are abundant with numerous species.
- Bird life is seasonally abundant.
- Marshes are found mostly in major bays, such as Morro Bay, Elkhorn Slough, and Drake’s Estero; they comprise about eight percent of the shoreline length.

PREDICTED OIL BEHAVIOR

- Oil adheres readily to marsh vegetation.
- The band of coating will vary widely, depending upon the tidal stage at the time oil slicks are in the vegetation. There may be multiple bands.
- Large slicks will persist through multiple tidal cycles and coat the entire stem from the high-tide line to the base.
- If the vegetation is thick, heavy oil coating will be restricted to the outer fringe, with penetration and lighter oiling to the limit of tidal influence.
- Medium to heavy oils do not readily adhere or penetrate the fine sediments, but can pool on the surface or in burrows.
- Light oils can penetrate the top few centimeters of sediment and deeply into burrows and cracks (up to one meter).

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

- Under light oiling, the best practice is to let the area recover naturally.
- Heavy accumulations of pooled oil can be removed by vacuum, sorbents, or low-pressure flushing. During flushing, care must be taken to prevent transporting oil to sensitive areas down slope or along shore.
- Cleanup activities should be carefully supervised to avoid vegetation damage.
- Any cleanup activity must not mix the oil deeper into the sediments. Trampling of the roots must be minimized.
- Cutting of oiled vegetation should only be considered when other resources present are at great risk from leaving the oiled vegetation in place.

